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4-19-2002

Resolution on Academic Calendar

USM Faculty Senate

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USM Faculty Senate, "Resolution on Academic Calendar" (2002). *Faculty Senate Resolutions*. Paper 51.
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Resolution: Academic Calendar

Passed April 19, 2002

In order to facilitate student learning and faculty teaching at the University of Southern Mississippi, we propose expanding the final exam dates and periods and shortening the regular course length of Fall and Spring semesters. Doing so will put our university in line with others in Mississippi and many of our peer regional institutions, who already have implemented more time for study and preparation immediately before and during final exam times, as well as during a break in mid-Fall semester. Not only will this provide for more flexible and improved time management of teaching and learning by students and faculty, it will help all to focus on knowledge gained and the application of that knowledge necessary for completing each course.

Therefore, Be it Resolved that USM adopt the following university calendar; that each Fall and Spring semester be scheduled with the following events falling at or near the dates listed each year:

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Fall Semester</u> <u>Event</u>
Monday August 19	Classes begin
Friday, August 24	Last day to register for classes
Monday, September 2	Labor Day Holiday
Monday, September 23	Last day to drop classes
Friday, October 11	Midpoint in Fall Semester
Thursday, October 17 Friday, October 18	Fall Break
Thursday, November 28 Friday, November 29	Thanksgiving Holidays
Monday, December 2 Tuesday, December 3	Stop Day* (Classes meet) Stop Day* (Classes meet) Tuesday Night Class Final Exams
Wednesday, December 4 Thursday, December 5 8:00 - 11:20 1:00 - 4:20 6:30 - 9:50	Stop Day* (Classes meet) Final Exams A C Thursday Night Classes

Friday, December 6

8:00 2

1:00 5

6:30 8

Saturday, December 7 Reading Day

Monday, December 9

8:00 1

1:00 3

6:30 Mon Night Classes

Tuesday, December 10

8:00 B

1:00 D

6:30 E

Wednesday, December 11

8:00 4

1:00 6

6:30 9

Thursday, December 12

8:00 7

1:00 F

6:30 G

Friday, December 13 Commencement

Spring Semester

Dates

Event

Monday, January 6 Classes begin

Friday, January 10 Last day to register for classes

Monday, January 20 Martin Luther King Day Holiday

Monday, January 27 Last day to drop classes

Tuesday, March 4 Mardi Gras Holiday

Friday, February 28 Midpoint in Spring Semester

Monday-Friday, March 10-14 Spring Break

Friday, April 18 Good Friday Holiday

Monday, April 28	Stop Day* (Classes meet)
Tuesday, April 29	Stop Day* (Classes meet) Night Class Final Exams
Wednesday, April 30	Stop Day* (Classes meet)
Thursday, May 1	Final Exams
8:00 - 11:20	A
1:00 - 4:20	C
6:30 - 9:50	Thursday Night Classes
Friday, May 2	
8:00	2
1:00	5
6:30	8
Saturday, May 3	Reading Day
Monday, May 5	
8:00	1
1:00	3
6:30	Mon Night Classes
Tuesday, May 6	
8:00	B
1:00	D
6:30	E
Wednesday, May 7	
8:00	4
1:00	6
6:30	9
Thursday, May 8	
8:00	7
1:00	F
6:30	G
Friday, May 9	Commencement

*** “Stop Days” Policy**

During the period of designated Stop Days, the following regulations shall apply:

1. No tests of any form may be given. This regulation includes unannounced or "pop" quizzes.
2. No term papers, presentations, projects, or other out-of-class assignments may fall due during the stop days or thereafter. (Any exceptions to this must be noted in the course syllabus with students being informed of such at the beginning of the semester and given an opportunity to complete

such prior to the stop days. In addition, routine or daily assignments that are part of a normal class operation may be made as long as these have been noted in the syllabus and students informed at the beginning of the semester.)

3. No student organization shall hold any official activity or event during the stop days.
4. It is the responsibility of the student to report faculty violations of the Stop Days policy to the appropriate department head (or dean), whose responsibility it shall be to investigate the complaint and take appropriate action. Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the student bringing the complaint. Issues not resolved at this level shall be resolved at the next higher level.
5. Violations of this policy by student organizations shall be reported to the Vice President for Student Affairs, whose responsibility it shall be to take appropriate action.
6. All exceptions to this policy must be recommended by the appropriate dean and approved by the Provost.
7. This policy applies to all regularly scheduled classes with the exception of those that meet only one day each week. Laboratory sessions that meet only one day per week are likewise excluded.

Supplementary comments

In the future, we propose shortening our university semesters at the University of Southern Mississippi upon the statewide approval of the IHL Board. Doing so will put our universities in line with our peer regional institutions who maintain an average semester length of 14.8 weeks prior to finals (compared to USM's current 16 weeks). Not only will this help to recruit and retain people in faculty and staff positions in tight budget times, but it will boost morale for faculty and students alike. A shorter semester will:

- allow more time for student work during breaks (especially Christmas break),
- make summer semester courses more available for teachers and other nine-month workers who desire to take college courses in the summer,
- provide time for graduate students to complete research projects and studies, especially for those who also teach during semesters,
- provide more time for faculty course planning along with updating course materials,
- and, importantly, allow time for quality faculty research/creative activity.

That future calendar would follow the same schedule as the calendar presented in our resolution, with the following changes:

Fall Semester

Event

Dates

Classes begin

Monday, August 26

Midpoint in Fall Semester

Wednesday, October 16

Thanksgiving Holidays

Wednesday, November 27

Thursday, November 28

Friday, November 29

Event

Spring Semester

Dates

Classes begin

Monday, January 13

Midpoint in Spring Semester

Wednesday, March 5